

BRISTOL BAY WATERSHED ASSESSMENT

INTERGOVERNMENTAL TECHNICAL TEAM GUIDELINES

July 2011

Background:

On February 7, 2011 EPA announced initiation of a watershed assessment of Bristol Bay, focusing primarily on the Kvichak and Nushagak drainages. The assessment will characterize the risks of large-scale developments on the Bristol Bay salmon fishery, and evaluate measures to protect the watersheds and ensure the sustainability of that fishery. EPA will conduct this assessment in an open, public format. The overall process will include:

- Collection and evaluation of scientific and technical information;
- Opportunities for tribal, state and federal experts to contribute to and review the information;
- Public meetings; and
- Tribal consultation

Intergovernmental Technical Team:

The Intergovernmental Technical Team is being convened to address the second bullet above. The purpose of this group is to bring together experts with scientific and traditional ecological knowledge who can provide input on the collection and evaluation of scientific and technical information for the assessment. The group will consist of federal and state agency scientists with expertise in watershed management, fisheries, and related fields, as well as representatives of Tribes in the Bristol Bay area who have expertise in watershed management, fisheries, and can provide traditional ecological knowledge.

This group is not part of the public review process, nor does it substitute for Tribal Consultation. Meetings of the Intergovernmental Technical Team are not public meetings and will not be open to the public. There will be opportunities for public input on the draft assessment at a later time in the process. EPA will consult with the Tribes under a separate process.

Principles for the Intergovernmental Technical Team:

1. EPA welcomes and encourages the representatives to share their understanding of the watersheds, including identification of scientific and traditional tribal data and information which may be helpful in our watershed assessment.
2. EPA will convene a meeting of the group by invitation to present our approach to the watershed assessment, results of our initial characterization of the watersheds, and our understanding about the complex ecological and human relationships that exist in the watershed.
3. EPA will provide, at a minimum, an agenda, a draft watershed assessment outline and a draft Conceptual Diagram in advance of the meeting.
4. The meeting will not be open to the public and will be limited to designated governmental agency and tribal representatives.

5. At the meeting, EPA will provide presentations from the EPA technical team and solicit input from the intergovernmental representatives about our assessment, the completeness of our information, additional sources of information, and findings to date.
6. Meetings of the group will be facilitated and will follow an agenda and ground rules designed to provide maximum opportunities for scientific and traditional knowledge input on the watershed assessment. The focus will be on scientific and technical information, not on legal or policy questions.
7. EPA will provide a period of time after the meeting for the participants to submit additional written comments providing technical information, if they so choose. EPA will not provide a formal written response to additional information provided.
8. The Intergovernmental Technical Team representatives are encouraged to share their knowledge and suggestions with the EPA technical team. EPA welcomes and will seriously consider all input about the watershed assessment but has ultimate responsibility for completing an assessment that is scientifically sound.
9. The Intergovernmental Technical Team is not expected to reach consensus recommendations; rather representatives are encouraged to share their professional expertise individually. However, EPA hopes that convening the group together for a productive interchange of ideas about the characteristics and relationships in the watersheds will contribute to a scientifically sound assessment.
10. All written information or data shared by the team members will be part of EPA's open and transparent process, may be used in the assessment and attributed to individuals, and will be publically releasable.

Expectations for Intergovernmental Technical Team Representatives

EPA expects that each federal, state and tribal representative will contribute his/her scientific, professional, and/or traditional knowledge in good faith and on behalf of the entity he/she represents. Representatives are asked to the meeting to present and share their government's scientific, technical and traditional knowledge on the watershed. Representatives are not being asked to provide legal or policy positions on behalf of the entity they represent or on behalf of non-governmental entities (e.g., environmental groups or corporations) they may be associated with directly or indirectly.

In order to ensure an open and transparent process, representatives will be asked to identify any affiliations with non-governmental entities with a stake in the outcome of the assessment so that EPA can understand and/or address any issues that could potentially harm the integrity of the watershed assessment process. As EPA considers input from the representatives, EPA and others associated with the watershed assessment will also be aware of and take into consideration each party's affiliations with other entities.